




Speech by

Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION BILL

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.29 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill 2011. The purpose of this bill is to maximise the safety and protection of those who fear or experience domestic violence; to prevent or reduce violence and the exposure of children to domestic violence; and to ensure offenders are held responsible for their actions. Among other things, the bill allows a magistrate or Children's Court to make a domestic violence order. Police are provided with additional powers including the issuing of a police protection notice. Consequences are imposed on the contravention of an order or notice. The court can make either a domestic violence order or a temporary protection order. Police may also apply for urgent temporary protection orders if an application for a protection order has been prepared but the officer believes it will not be decided sufficiently quickly to protect a person.

The committee recommendation to replace the term 'intervention order' with the term 'intervention agreement' to reflect the non-mandatory nature was supported in principle by the minister, but as the word 'agreement' cannot be used in the title of an official court outcome the minister proposes to amend division 6 to replace 'intervention order' with 'voluntary intervention order'. I see the committee also recommended supporting the passage of the bill with a Police Service funding allocation to assist the Domestic and Family Violence Unit with implementation. The minister agreed and indicated that the sum of \$300,000 would be made available.

What are the different characteristics of healthy and abusive relationships? Safe and healthy relationship characteristics include the concept of partnership, joint decision making and shared responsibilities; economic equality; freedom to decide issues of work, school and money; emotional honesty; feeling safe to admit and share fears and insecurities; sexual respect and accepting that no means no; physical safety and respect of a partner's physical space and to express oneself non-violently; respecting the right to differing feelings, friends and activities; and supporting a partner's goals and valuing a partner's opinions. My research revealed, on the other hand, that the characteristics of abusive relationships include domination; the abuser decides; a servant/master mentality; economic control including denying job freedom and withholding money; emotional manipulation through the use of jealousy, passion, stress and frustration to justify actions; sexual abuse and forcing a partner to do things against his or her will. Of course physical abuse, including hitting, choking, kicking, pinching and the use of weapons, is also included. There is also intimidation; charming in public and menacing in private; destroying property or hurting or killing pets; name calling, mind games and isolating the partner from friends and loved ones. These are the attributes of an abusive relationship.

Domestic violence is a widespread but often hidden problem in Queensland and Australia. It occurs in all parts of society regardless of economic status, age, cultural and ethnic background or, for that matter, religious belief. The devastating effects, short term and long term, impact on families including the children and the community as a whole. As I outlined earlier, domestic violence is the repeated use of coercive and controlling behaviour to limit, direct and shape a partner's thoughts, feelings and actions. Domestic violence is most often 'gendered violence' and is an abuse of power within a relationship or after separation. In the large majority of cases the offender is male and the victim female.

Children and young people are profoundly affected by domestic violence as witnesses and as victims. It is estimated that in the past year between five and 10 per cent of Australian women experienced at least one incident of physical and/or sexual violence by a man. Sadly, women are most at risk of violence in the home and from men they know. Among women physically assaulted in the past 12 months, the most frequent category of perpetrator was male current or previous partner, and the second most frequent category was male family member or friend.

Young women are at greater risk of violence than older women. According to ABS figures, 12 per cent of women aged 18 to 24 years experienced at least one incident of violence compared to 6.5 per cent of women aged 35 to 44 years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience higher rates of violence than other women. The Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey found that, overall, 20 per cent of Indigenous women experienced physical violence in the past 12 months compared to seven per cent of non-Indigenous women, and three times as many Indigenous women as non-Indigenous women experienced an incident of sexual violence in the past 12 months.

Intimate partner homicides account for one-fifth of all homicides in Australia. Of these, four out of five involve a man killing his female partner. Typically, women are killed in the context of a history of domestic violence. A study by VicHealth in 2004 found that, among women aged under 45, intimate partner violence contributes more to their poor health, disability and death than any other risk factor, including obesity and smoking. Violence against women has long-term effects on men's and women's relationships, on their children and on communities.

I welcome this legislation as it is long overdue. If there is a criticism, it is the time it has taken to bring this legislation before the House. It was first publicised in early 2010. I will finish my contribution with the White Ribbon pledge—

I swear never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women. This is my oath.